

The Western States and Tribal Nations Initiative to export Piceance and Uintah basin natural gas to Asian LNG markets is gaining momentum, and the acceleration comes as our need to create benefits from our collective resources is as important as ever to not just our states but the world at large.

First, a little history. The initiative grew out of a memorandum of understanding between the The Western States Rural Natural Gas Initiative was formed by the Colorado and Utah Energy Offices, which to established a long-term collaboration in common approach toward developing markets for those basins' Piceance and Uintah basin natural gas that wtoould help strengthen and benefit both states' the rural economies. of both states. Dubbing this new collaboration the "Western States Rural Natural Gas Initiative" (WSRNGI), the energy offices signed a Memorandum of Understanding to formalize their joint efforts and to develop a Report to serve as the basis for long-term coordination and collaboration between the two states.

The WSRNGI Report, released in April 2019, assesses the significant resource base of the Piceance/Uintah basin and the technical and economic advantages of using Rockies natural gas for export to Asian LNG markets.—

The initiative's momentum gained speed when the sovereign nation of the for the Initiative continues to grow. First, the Ute Indian Tribe and the State of Wyoming, —recognizedalizing the benefits to their sovereign nation, and joined the effort. In April, the initiative issued a report assessing the significant resource base of the Piceance/Uintah basin as well as the economic and technical advantages of exporting Rockies natural gas to Asian LNG markets. signed on to the Memorandum of Understanding, thereby changing the name of our Initiative to the Western States and Tribal Nations Initiative (this "Initiative"). Now, we are proud of the addition of another neighboring state, Wyoming.

As the movement to join this Initiative continues to gain steam, the need to export our collective natural gas resources is as important as ever.—We first grew were excited about this iInitiative because of the enormous economic benefits to rural economies in energy—producing counties; like Garfield, Mesa, Rio Blanco and Moffat. —That's because —We have an abundance of natural gas resources in the Piceance Basin is so rich: .—The U.S.nited States Geological Survey estimates that there is 100 trillion cubic feet of discoverable natural gas resources in the Piceance Basin alonethere. That's enough natural gas to power the entire .—Just to put this number in perspective, there is enough natural gas in the Piceance Basin to power the whole state of California...for fifty for 50 years!

Our energy—producing counties are subject to natural gas market fluctuations in the natural gas market, as with any other commodity market, which makes predicting local government budgets difficult. —But we can stabilize our economies for decades to come bSo, by marketing our natural gas resources overseas to places like Japan, China, India, South Korea, and Eastern Europe, —we have the ability to stabilize our economies for decades to comeand locking in contracts that last as long as 20 years.—The contracts with these LNG-consuming countries can be for as long as twenty years, which gives us the ability to continue to invest our resources into diversifying our economies.

What's more exciting is that what benefits us locally will translate into geopolitical and environmental gains for the United States and the world.

By exporting natural gas to our allies, especially in Eastern Europe, they will no longer be held hostage to the political whims of Russia – which has never been afraid to shut off the gas in wintertime to punish countries.

The fact that gas from our four Colorado counties, the Ute Indian Tribe, Utah and Wyoming can be help our nation protect its allies makes our initiative even more crucial.

Our natural gas will also help our allies and the world achieve a cleaner, safer environment. Clean air and water are top priority for all of us, because we are raising our families in this community and providing a safe, healthy environment is non-negotiable.

We can extend that commitment to nations that are burning dirty fuels by exporting clean-burning natural gas produced in our states and counties, and significantly contribute to a cleaner and safer world for all of us.

There is one other benefit the Western States and Tribal Nations can share – poverty reduction. The World Bank estimates that, as of 2015, there were 736 million people living in poverty globally. One cause of extreme poverty is a lack of basic energy resources.

Our states and counties in the West can give them the tools to strengthen their countries and the opportunities to make the lives of our fellow neighbors abroad more secure. We have a moral obligation to export our natural gas resources to underdeveloped and developing countries in an effort raise people out of poverty.

~~In Northwest Colorado, we face many challenges in diversifying our economy. In Mesa County alone, seven out of ten of our largest property tax payers are oil and gas companies. Counties are dependent on property tax to fund our budgets. a bigger picture came into view and helped frame the role of Western States and Tribal Nations stakeholders in the global geopolitical puzzle. The ability to export United States natural gas overseas will help with geopolitical stabilization of our allies, especially in Eastern Europe. They will no longer be held hostage to the political whims of Russia. In a recent conversation about the United States' "natural gas revolution" with a woman from Lithuania, she was grateful to hear that natural gas exports may be the way to help free her family from Russian control. The fact that natural gas from our four Colorado counties, along with the natural gas from our neighboring states of Utah, Wyoming and the Ute Indian Tribe, can be responsible for the geopolitical stabilization of nations makes our Initiative even more crucial.~~

~~However, the role of Western States and Tribal Nations is even bigger than geopolitical stabilization. According to the World Bank, an organization dedicated to eradicating extreme poverty worldwide, as of 2015, there were 736 million people living in poverty globally. Part of the cause of extreme poverty is lack of basic energy resources. Our states and counties in the West have the ability to be instrumental in bringing people out of poverty. Let us give them the tools to strengthen their countries and the opportunities to make the lives of our fellow neighbors~~

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~~Finally, we all care about the environment. Clean air and clean water are a priority for all of us. We live and are raising our families in this community and our commitment to a healthy and safe environment for our constituents and their children is our number one priority. Exporting our natural gas resources will help extend this commitment globally. It is not enough that the United States is working so diligently to use innovation and technology to make energy development cleaner if countries abroad are burning dirty fuels. Clean burning natural gas produced in our states and counties, and exported globally through this Initiative, can significantly contribute to a cleaner and safer world for all of us.~~

~~Our business community includes agriculture, outdoor recreation, manufacturing, health care, tech companies and many small businesses and entrepreneurs. Situated approximately four hours from Denver and four hours from Salt Lake City, and surrounded by an abundance of natural resources to provide recreation and enjoyment, Mesa County has plenty to offer. However, transportation challenges with I-70 make it difficult for businesses to expand their business and to recruit new businesses to our area.~~

~~Mesa County is the hub of the energy industry in Northwest Colorado. While most of the energy development occurs in our neighboring counties of Garfield, Rio Blanco and Moffat counties, the service companies are located in Mesa County and the employees, and their families, live in Mesa County. Their children go to our schools and they contribute money into our economy.~~

~~Stabilizing our economy was the initial reason that our counties engaged on exporting natural gas resources. But, as we continued to work on marketing our natural gas resources,~~ a bigger picture came into view and helped frame the role of Western States and Tribal Nations stakeholders in the global geopolitical puzzle. The ability to export United States natural gas overseas will help with geopolitical stabilization of our allies, especially in Eastern Europe. They will no longer be held hostage to the political whims of Russia. In a recent conversation about the United States' "natural gas revolution" with a woman from Lithuania, she was grateful to hear that natural gas exports may be the way to help free her family from Russian control. The fact that natural gas from our four Colorado counties, along with the natural gas from our neighboring states of Utah, Wyoming and the Ute Indian Tribe, can be responsible for the geopolitical stabilization of nations makes our Initiative even more crucial.

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Whether your motivation is stabilizing ation of rural economies in energy-producing counties or our allies , geopolitical stabilization of our allies abroad, lifting people out of poverty or a contributing to a cleaner global environment, supporting the export of natural gas resources is the responsibility of all Americans.-

Through this initiative, Utah, Wyoming, the Ute Indian Tribe and four counties in Northwest Colorado, with more and the -states that will join us in the to join in the future, will help are helping to lead the way in the United States for greater natural gas exports on exporting natural gas overseas.

Rose Pugliese, Mesa County Commissioner, Chair

Ray Scott, Colorado State Senator, District 7

"We hope more elected leaders in Colorado see the crucial importance of policies that encourage all forms of energy development that we see happening in states like Utah and Wyoming that encourage natural gas and other clean energy."